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## RAILWAY MEN NOT SEEKING REAL EIGHT HOUR DAY

Actual Object Is Enormous Wage In-  
crease For No More Work,  
Companies Declare.

What is an eight hour day? The answer to this question is one of the vital points in the wage controversy between the railroads and their engineers, conductors, firemen and brakemen which will come to a head early in August, when the employees complete the nation wide strike vote they are now taking to enforce their demands.

The railroad managers say that the train employees' organizations are misleading the public when they refer to their demands as providing for an eight hour day. They declare that the eight hour "basic" day which the employees are contending for merely provides for an enormous increase in wages by increasing the rate of pay per hour without either limiting the working day to eight hours or even requiring a full eight hours work for a day's pay.

The spokesmen for the brotherhoods admit that they are not asking for a "real" or "absolute" eight hour day, but they insist that the granting of the demand for a day's wage for eight hours or less and for 50 per cent more than the regular hourly rate for all overtime will make it so expensive for the roads to work their train crews for more than eight hours that they will increase the speed of their trains and thus effect a reduction in the working hours of the train crews.

This assertion was explained recently by W. G. Lee, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, who said:

"If all terminals were 100 miles apart we would be in a position to demand an absolute eight hour day. But we recognize that the divisions vary in length, many exceeding 100 miles. As a concession to the railroads we have agreed to the twelve and one-half mile basis in lieu of the absolute eight hour day. On long divisions it permits them (the managements) to ignore the eight hour day and escape the overtime by simply making an average speed of trains equal to or exceeding twelve and one-half miles an hour."

On the other hand, the railroad managers assert that they cannot increase the average speed of their trains without decreasing the load of each train and running more trains, which would require the employment of more train crews to handle the same amount of freight they now carry. This, they say, would increase operating expenses by even more than the increase in wages would amount to.

In order to provide for a real eight hour day the railroad managers declare many changes would have to be made not only in the wording of the demands as presented by the employees, but also in many of the most important of the other provisions of the present wage schedules which the brotherhoods insist shall be left unchanged. Most of the present schedules applying to freight and switching service provide for a day's wage for each 100 miles or less their trains run or for each ten hours or less of work, thus guaranteeing a day's pay to any man who is called for any work during the day. They also provide for extra payment for hours in excess of ten or miles in excess of 100. In passenger service the basis for a day's pay is even less. In the case of engineers and firemen it is five hours in eastern territory and six hours and forty minutes in western territory. The demands provide for a day's pay for eight hours or less or 100 miles or less and do not apply to the passenger service, which is already on a basis more favorable to the employees than an eight hour day.

The demand for time and one-half for overtime would therefore penalize the railroads, they say, for time required to complete a train run in excess of eight hours or for any delay, while the employees would still continue to draw a full day's pay in many cases for considerably less than the standard day's work.

TO SETTLE LABOR DISPUTES.

Federal Body Should Fix Railway Rates and Wages.

Baton Rouge, La.—Commenting on the prospective railroad strike for higher wages, the Times says:

Congress should pass an act at once giving the interstate commerce commission authority to settle the labor disputes, just as it has the right to fix rates.

It is more important that the interstate commerce commission have the right to fix wages and settle disputes than it is that it have the right to determine freight rates and prohibit rebates.

Business can hobble along under high freight rates. Death would follow a general railroad strike.

Both the railroads and the railroad men may be able to withstand a strike, but the public cannot. The public is not in a position to face a general strike of the railroads in the country.

The calamity is too awful to contemplate.

It would be more frightful than a dozen Mexican wars. It should not be in the power of a set of men to bring such a disaster to the public.

The commission has the right to say what the railroads shall charge for their service.

This commission should be given the right to say what they shall pay for the labor that it takes to perform this service.

And it should be given this authority at once.

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## BIG STRIKE IMPENDS ON ALL RAILROADS

Four Brotherhoods Make Unprecedented Wage Demand.

ASK FOR \$100,000,000 A YEAR

All Plans For Settlement Have Been Rejected by Brotherhood Leaders, Who Are Now Engaged in Taking Strike Vote and Will Return For Another Conference Early In August.

The most important strike vote in the history of labor disputes is now being taken by the more than 300,000 engineers, conductors, firemen and brakemen employed on the railroads of the United States to enforce their demand for an increase in wages estimated by the railroad managers at \$100,000,000 a year.

In many ways the situation thus created is absolutely unprecedented. Never before has a demand for so large a raise in pay been presented to a single group of employees at one time.

If the employees vote to leave the service the leaders of the four train service brotherhoods will have the power to declare the biggest strike ever experienced.

Never before has a strike on all the railroads of the country even been seriously threatened. The "big four" brotherhoods of train employees have heretofore confined their concerted wage movements to one section of the country at a time, and while the engineers and firemen or the conductors and brakemen have frequently joined in such movements this is the first case in which all four organizations have combined to enforce an increase in wages.

While the demands apply only to freight and switching service, excepting the passenger service, all of the employees who are members of the organizations, as well as all nonunion train employees, are being called upon to vote for a strike.

The train employees are demanding an eight hour "basic" day—in other words, that they shall be paid the same wage for eight hours or 100 miles or less that they now receive for ten hours or 100 miles or less. This would make the hourly rate one-eighth of a day's pay or the equivalent of twelve and one-half miles instead of one-tenth of a day's pay or the equivalent of ten miles. They also demand "time and one-half for overtime" or a rate of pay 50 per cent higher than the regular rate, for all time over eight hours or over the time which would be required to complete a trip at a speed of twelve and one-half miles per hour.

The demands were formulated by a committee of the executive officers of the four brotherhoods in Chicago last December, and were first submitted to a referendum vote of the men. The demands were formally served on the roads on March 20, with a request that the railroads appoint a conference committee representing all the roads to negotiate with a committee representing the organizations.

The railroads promptly replied with a notice that in connection with the proposals of the employees they desired to have considered certain provisions in the present schedules, which if continued in connection with the higher basis of pay, would lead to unfair results and in many cases would multiply the inequities of double compensation for the same time or service. Arrangements were made for a conference to be held at New York beginning on June 1 for the purpose of discussing the demands. The roads were represented by the national conference committee of the railroads and the employees by the executive officers and general chairmen of the four brotherhoods. The conference lasted two weeks. The brotherhood leaders refused to consider any modification of their demands and the railroads were unwilling to grant a further large increase in wages to the highest paid class of their employees without a mandate from some tribunal representing the public. On June 15 the conference committee gave the brotherhoods a formal reply declining to grant the demands, but proposing that the entire controversy be settled, preferably by submission of the entire question to the interstate commerce commission or else by arbitration under the Newlands law. Both plans for a settlement were rejected by the brotherhood leaders, who announced their intention of taking a strike vote and returning for another conference early in August.

Write to Your Congressman.

Chicago.—In an editorial demanding that congress empower the interstate commerce commission to intervene in the railway wage controversy the Chicago Tribune says:

If there ever was a time for citizens to write to their congressmen it is now. The nation will have to intervene in this railroad strike for self protection. The nation wants justice done to both sides. Justice will not come from permitting a fight between the railroad employees and employers.

All that can possibly come of it will be intense suffering throughout the country.

The public will not long maintain the role of innocent bystander.

The interstate commerce commission should be empowered to prevent this threatened railroad strike. Congress can so empower it.

This is a national emergency. Write to your congressman about it.

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